

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5057

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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FAA BRUSSELS

UNCLAS PARIS 27122

E.O. LL652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, PINS, FR, US

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: GISCARD AND PONIATOWSKI STATEMENTS
ON TWA HIJACKING

REF: PARIS 26681

1. FRANCE-SOIR PURSUES POLEMIC OVER GOF POLICY ON
HIJACKINGS (REFTEL) WITH HEADLINE ON FRONT PAGE OF
SEPT. L6 AFTERNOON EDITION READING: "THE PILOTS ARE
NOT IN AGREEMENT...FRANCE-SOIR OPENS THE DOSSIER."
SUB-CAPTION READS: "THEY (THE PILOTS) CONSIDER,
CONTRARY TO WIDELY HELD OPINION, THAT SYSTEMATIC
FIRMNESS PLACES IN DANGER THE LIVES OF PASSENGERS AND
CREW MEMBERS."

2. "DOSSIER" CONSISTS OF INTERVIEW ON INSIDE PAGE WITH
SENIOR AIR FRANCE PILOT WHO IS NOT IDENTIFIED BY NAME.
PILOT IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO
EVERY RULE AND FACT THAT TWA HIJACKING ENDED HAPPILY
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WAS PERHAPS FORTUITOUS. HE CRITICIZED GOF REQUEST THAT

HIJACKED 727 DIVERT TO REIMS WHEN ALREADY RUNNING LOW ON FUEL. CAPTAIN ALONE, HE SAID, MUST REMAIN IN COMPLETE CHARGE OF AIRCRAFT, EVEN WHEN ON THE GROUND, SINCE ONLY CAPTAIN IS IN A POSITION TO EVALUATE THE DANGER OF A SITUATION ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT. HE ADMITTED THAT PILOTS WERE ON RECORD AS URGING FIRM ANTI-HIJACKING POLICIES, BUT HE STRESSED THAT THIS REFERRED TO MEASURES FOR PREVENTING HIJACKINGS AND FOR PUNISHING HIJACKERS. METHODS OF FIRMNESS MAY DIFFER IN COPING WITH DIFFERENT HIJACKINGS, SINCE THE SAME MEASURES MAY NOT ALWAYS BE APPLICABLE. REFUSING LANDING TO AN AIRCRAFT SHORT OF FUEL WAS OPEN TO CRITICISM, HE SAID, AS WAS DEFLATING THE TIRES OF THE AIRCRAFT BEFORE HAVING ANY KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE REACTION OF THE HIJACKERS MIGHT BE. "THE MIRACLE OF ROISSY (CDG) MAY NOT ALWAYS REOCCUR," THE PILOT IS QUOTED AS SAYING.

3. FRANCE-SOIR SUPPLEMENTS THE INTERVIEW WITH EDITORIAL COMMENT STATING THAT FRANCE-SOIR IS IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE "PERSONAL OPINION" OF THIS ONE PILOT. FRANCE-SOIR THEN EXPRESSES THE CONVICTION THAT ONLY A STATED POLICY OF FIRMNESS IN REPRESSING TERRORISM WILL DISCOURAGE TERRORIST ACTS, AND THE NEWSPAPER ADDS THAT INTERIOR MINISTER PONIATOWSKI'S ACTION IN THREATENING THE HIJACKERS WITH REPRISAL IF THEY HARMED THE PASSENGERS AND ALSO IN HAVING THE TIRES OF THE AIRCRAFT DEFLATED CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THWARTING THE HIJACKERS. RUSH

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